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STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ATI Access to Information

ECZ Electoral Commission of Zambia

IBA Independent Broadcasting Authority

NAPSA National Pensions Scheme Authority

UPND United Party for National Development

USAID United States Agency for International Development

ZAMEC Zambia Media Council

ZICTAZambia Information and Communication Technology Authority

ZIIMA Zambia Institute of Independent Media Alliance

ZNBC Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of the Media Report is a quarterly assessment of the media environment in Zambia. This edition covers the third quarter of 2020 i.e. July-September. This assessment and record describes the media situation in Zambia during the period and was prepared under the auspices of MISA Zambia Chapter.

This report includes a number of interesting occurrences that added new developments, twists and opportunities alike for the overall media environment in Zambia.

The socio-political environment was found to be relatively unfree, an assessment which is largely attributed to the political attacks and intimidation of media outlets and practitioners alike. These include a brutal attack on Mafken Radio in Mufulira as well as the illegal closure of PASME Radio in Petauke by the District Commissioner, among other occurrences. This continued to undermine the independence of media outlets and also instilled self-censorship for fear of political retribution.

The legal environment was neutral as certain significant and relatively positive trends were observed. These included the approval of the Media Council Bill which could benefit the media fraternity by providing protection and improving professional standards. Further, legal victories observed in cases such as that between NAPSA and News Diggers Newspaper as well as the absence of new legislation aimed at stifling freedom of the press augmented the status of the legal environment in the quarter.

On the other hand, the economic environment was found to be unstable mainly because of adverse economic conditions as well as the effects of the coronavirus pandemic which did not spare media houses. This led to an increase in the cost of doing business for media houses and loss of advertising revenue in view of reduced consumer spending and business activity. Further, the continued depreciation of the Kwacha against major convertible currencies, electricity load shedding and the difficulty in accessing credit all undermined the economic independence and financial sustainability of the media in the quarter.

The technological environment was stable given the positive developments recorded during the quarter, such as the innovative use of media technology to augment learning for schools, whose calendar was affected by the outbreak of COVID-19. Unfortunately, the state of freedom of

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expression online remained relatively weak throughout the quarter, particularly undermined by the threats against citizens expressing dissenting views online, as well as the arbitrary application of laws such as that witnessed in the alleged powers of the IBA to regulate the streaming ('broadcasting') of content through social networks.

These findings and other data compiled in the course of the study formed the conclusion on the state of the media in the quarter under review. Overall, the state of the media remained unchanged when compared to the second quarter, despite marginal, insignificant gains posted in certain variables in some of the key thematic areas under consideration.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The *State of the Media* is a quarterly report of trends and developments in the media sector as compiled by the MISA Zambia Chapter. The report serves as an advocacy tool for media policy reform as well as an archive of information which can be used for reference on media developments in Zambia.

The report has previously helped to shape policy formulation with regard to media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information in Zambia. The report, which has been published quarterly for over fifteen (15) years, serves as a tool for dialogue and action in the media fraternity, government and non-governmental sectors alike.

The rationale of the report is based on the corollary between media performance of certain cardinal functions and democratic governance. However, the media are affected by various trends and developments that could undermine their performance.

In this regard, the report is divided into various sections covering the socio-political, economic, legal and technological environment in which the media operated in the period under review.

The objectives of the report are, therefore, to:

- Report political, economic, legal and technological trends in the media sector in Zambia
- Assess the level of freedom of expression and media freedom

2.0. METHODOLOGY

The report is exploratory and descriptive in nature as it mainly aims to present the general state of the media sector in the identified quarters.

In compiling the report, a desk review was conducted in which an analysis of various materials pertaining to freedom of expression and the welfare of the media within the quarter under consideration. This was augmented by a content analysis of various media publications (electronic, print and online) as well as media violation alerts to establish the common themes with regard to the objectives of the study.

The report also employed the use of interviews with purposively selected participants on the basis of their known or presumed knowledge about issues related to or affecting the state of the media. The participants comprised media experts and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services. Interviews were also conducted with practising journalists (including press clubs and media outlets in selected provinces) to gain a deeper understanding and validation of some of the phenomena observed in the two quarters.

3.0. FINDINGS

3.1. SOCIO-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The quarter under review witnessed a continuation of most trends observed in the sociopolitical environment in the second quarter covering April to June. Of particular note was the occurrence of political violence against radio stations hosting opposition leaders on paid-for programmes, which are a source of income for most of the outlets.

One such case was an attack on Mafken Radio in Mufulira on 10th July by suspected Patriotic Front party cadres who attempted to stop a live radio programme featuring UPND president, Hakainde Hichilema. The cadres allegedly wanted to torch the radio station after other similar attacks on the opposition party's offices in the town. The attack was further justified by the area MP, Evans Chibanda, who was widely reported as stating that only the ruling party was allowed to speak on radio in the Town¹.

Another notable incident recorded in the same quarter is the illegal closure of PASME radio by Petauke District Commissioner, Velenasi Moyo, for hosting opposition UPND President, Hakainde Hichilema on a recorded programme.

The District Commissioner demanded for a Police permit from the radio station for running the programme featuring an opposition leader, despite the station having notified police earlier in the day, with no security objection or concern made by the latter. The District Commissioner is further reported to have stated that the station would remain closed until further notice because of "hosting opposition leaders"².

This action, which amounts to political interference, was strongly condemned by various actors both within and outside the media fraternity as an affront to the independence and freedom of the media. One such organisation, the ZIIMA, through its president Jajah Coulibaly, issued the following:

https://diggers.news/local/2020/07/16/mufulira-mps-only-pf-allowed-to-speak-on-radio-remarks-dangerous-caritas/

¹ As reported by News Diggers on 16th July, 2020. See

² As narrated to MISA Zambia in an alert update submitted by PASME Radio Station after the incident

The Zambia Institute of Independent Media Alliance (ZIIMA) would like to challenge the Zambia police service to arrest a traceable perpetrator of media attacks who happens to be a District Commissioner in Petauke.

It is sad that in this time and era, officers from the police service who were used to close down PASME FM in Petauke district Eastern province at the orders of a civil servant do not even understand the law but ignorantly act on political instructions.

As a media body that is thriving to promote media freedoms, we are shocked that civil servants under the current leadership go unpunished despite committing crimes, the latest ones being the Petauke and Mwinilunga DC who also blocked well-wishers from donating.

We want to remind the head of state that the continued uncouth behavior of his appointees will not stop until he cracks a whip, failure to do so will cement our view that they have his blessings.

We would also like to challenge the police command who have been making blanket statements on unprofessional cops to discipline the two officers who were used to close down a media house that was airing a paid for radio program.

Media houses are operating under harsh economic conditions with the coming of Covid-19 and blocking a source of income for the radio station is totally shameful and evil.

ZIIMA would also like to urge the radio station to take up this matter and exhaust all legal avenues to send a clear message to would be perpetrators.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued by the Zambia Police a few days after the attack on Mafken Radio in Mufulira, Inspector General, Kakoma Kanganja sternly warned political party cadres against the vice, stating in part that: "the growing trend of thugs attacking radio stations under the guise of politics is criminal and should come to an end forthwith... any person who may feel offended by the content of any interview should follow the due process of the law by

registering their grievances to the police or other relevant authorities and not taking the law into their own hands"³.

As stated earlier, the trend of violent attacks and political interference in the operations of media outlets was observed in both the first and second quarters⁴. In some instances, police are seen to drag their feet, particularly in cases where the ruling party is involved, as observed in some of the attacks in the previous quarters at Mpika, Muchinga and Isoka radio stations, among others. Equally, cases of District Commissioners interfering in the operations of media houses were rife in the previous quarters and it is, therefore, disappointing that the trend continued unabated in the quarter under review.

The net effect of these violent attacks and continued interference in the operations of the media is a "chilling effect" as media will endeavour to avoid fulfilling their functions for fear of such political retribution. The media, according to Norris (2000:9) have three significant functions under normative assumptions of a representative democracy. First, the media are expected to facilitate pluralistic competition by acting as a civic forum for debate. Second, the media facilitate public participation and encourage political learning and interest. Third, the media preserve the conditions for civil liberties and political rights. These functions can only be fulfilled if a safe and conducive environment is created and the relevant authorities take necessary punitive action against erring officers. The attacks and interference are clearly a sign of a high level of intolerance of dissenting views, a situation that can influence media performance⁵. Commenting on political violence against media outlets and practitioners, one of the respondents, Joy Chula, Chairperson of the Lusaka Press Club stated that:

As an individual, my work has not been affected by political violence and harassment of journalists. However, I get disturbed professionally when I hear of attacks on fellow practising journalists. There are many of such cases in the country where radio stations and journalists are attacked on account of what they broadcast or publish to the public. Journalists are not there to please a certain segment of society or specific political

³ See https://www.zambianobserver.com/it-will-not-be-business-as-usuali-have-directed-my-officers-to-apply-law-accordingly-kanganja-warns-pf-thugs/

⁴ As reported in the MISA State of the Media Report, First and Second Quarter, 2020

⁵ According to findings in Manchishi, K. (2017). Defamation of the President and the law's effect on media performance: a study of the Post and Zambia Daily Mail Newspaper. Unpublished master's dissertation. Lusaka: UNZA.

parties but to cover everyone and report ethically/professionally. Attacks on journalists are usually perpetuated mainly by ruling party supporters. Zambia must seek ways of stopping such attacks especially as Zambia approaches the 2021 elections. Journalists must operate freely and independently without any undue pressure from external forces

Incidents such as the illegal closure of PASME radio in Petauke are major setbacks firstly because the person involved (a District Commissioner) is a senior civil servant expected to uphold high standards and support the implementation of government policy, including that of promoting a pluralistic media environment. A District Commissioner is expected to be at the forefront protecting the rule of law and not tramping roughshod on it. The move by the Petauke DC was clearly a blatant disregard of the directive issued in the previous quarter by Chief Government Spokesperson and Minister of Information, Dora Siliya, when DCs in Mpika and Chinsali similarly interfered in the operations of media outlets. It is, therefore, prudent that government takes decisive action against such officers if its pronouncements and commitment to media freedom are to mean anything.

Further, such a move by a District Commissioner is also in disregard of the mandate of the Independent Broadcasting Authority which is the competent institution to handle offences by broadcast media outlets. The least an aggrieved person can do is to formally complain to a broadcast station and later escalate the complaint to the Authority if the action taken by the station is unsatisfactory. This is the due process prescribed by the IBA (Amendment) Act of 2010^6 and it is important that all stakeholders respect the process, a position which the Authority reiterated after the attack on Mafken Radio⁷.

It is, therefore, not surprising that PASME, a private station, proceeded to demand for a sum of K2 million as damages arising from District Commissioner Velenesi Moyo's interruption of the paid for programme as well as trespass through its lawyer Mr Gilbert Phiri⁸. MISA Zambia assisted the station to hire the lawyer; Mr Gilbert Phiri.

threats-against-broadcasting-stations-unfortunateiba/

⁶ Available at https://www.iba.org.zm/downloads/IBA2010 act. pdf

⁷ See https://diggers.news/local/2020/07/14/violence-

⁸ According to a demand letter dated August 17, 2020 for damages for trespass addressed to Moyo by Messrs PNP Advocates, the lawyers representing the radio station

It is notable from this incident that there is need for increased protection of media practitioners and outlets. The current provision on freedom of the press in Article 20 (1) of the Constitution does very little to shield the media from such violent attacks as it is vague and laxly stated (without providing any explicit guarantee of press freedom) while there exist several clawback clauses in the same Article in addition to subsidiary legislation inimical to freedom of the press.

The continued attacks on the media in the quarter under review were against the backdrop of a marked deterioration in the level of freedom of expression in the country, with US Charge d'Affaires, David Young, observing this in a widely shared speech. Mr Young stated that:

It is unfortunate in Zambia today that it is frowned upon to say anything critical about seeing your government leaders or problems in government without risking being censored or even threatened with arrests. The first of reservists for freedoms is freedom of speech and in many ways, it is the foundational of civil and political rights. It is central to all freedoms, expression through the press, assembly, peaceful protests, belief. If you can't say what you believe, you aren't truly free. Today, freedom of speech is under threat around the world. In many countries, you risk imprisonment for simply voicing your opinion which is the violation of the basic tenet of liberty.

Now freedom of speech is often difficult because at its, core it requires that people who decide to go into public life must tolerate criticism from all corners. Whether you are a mayor, a police chief, a diplomat or a national leader, democracy requires you to sign up for public criticism. If you want to have political power and influence and status and responsibilities of public office, you have to be willing to be criticized fairly and unfairly sometimes you might even be called names.

Now, I am not an elected official, I am a career diplomat but I occupy a position of public trust from my country and that means I will be criticized for what I do or say and for the policies of my government which I represent. But I defend that criticism even when it is directed against me because that is freedom of speech, our utmost sacred right as free people, that is what freedom means. In the United States today, our commitment to freedom of speech is on television screens around the world. As the whole world knows we have some serious problems that need serious attention; racist violence and incidences of police brutality.

The horrific killing of George Floyd has jolted America weak to the need to change our policies, protect our citizens and address systematic problems of racism. That is where freedom of speech comes in, if we didn't have freedom of speech, we wouldn't have continued to improve as individuals and as a nation. We wouldn't have allowed freedom of speech and debates in the press, in social media and peaceful protests in our streets. Today, I am hopeful that out of the terrible tragedy of Mr Floyd's death, some good may come precisely because our citizens are exercising their freedom of speech to press for much needed change.

Now please allow me to share a couple of reflections on freedom of speech in Zambia. Like the United States and other countries, Zambia is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and thus committed to free speech. Some people say if you are criticizing the President, you are unpatriotic. One leader in the National Assembly said 'government and party cadres should break the bones of its critics,' that is inflammatory and not a peaceful exercise of freedom of speech. For me, freedom of speech needs to take place in the context of peaceful expression.

If party cadres break into a radio station because the host is interviewing an opposition leader, that is a violation of freedom of speech. If media outlets that feature opposition and critical voices are closed, that is not freedom of speech. And when the Public Order Act is unevenly applied allowing one party unfair advantage of holding events and rallies while opposing parties and civil society groups are not granted the same, that is restriction on freedom of speech.

Now at the same time these freedoms must be used responsibly. Social media is an important part of our lives today and can be used in a thousand different ways, both good and bad. With cautious strive to ensure that social media is not used to distribute hate speech or misogynistic speech but when discussing the regulations of social media, it is important not to outlaw, prohibit fair comment and criticism of public officials. Respectful and peaceful debate and disagreement are essential parts of freedom of speech, our most precious right. I strongly encourage Zambia to promote and protect these freedoms which are essential to your democracy. To my Zambian friends, in government and outside government, I am convinced that your democracy and

governance in the country will be strengthened by encouraging these fundamental freedoms

Also notable in the quarter was the launch of the 'Trust in the media' report, a baseline study conducted in three countries in the SADC region i.e. Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi to generate evidence on the state of trust in the media⁹. The report aimed to review the status of media products in relation to quality, diversity and reach as well as to establish media diversity in terms of variety of outlets, quality in terms of objectivity, accuracy, balance, diversification and credibility of sources.

One of the notable findings of the report is that there is more trust in the private media over public media in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe because the public media is considered to be obsolete, bureaucratic and overly elitist. The report also found that with regard to political news, both private and public stations tend to take sides, with the private stations usually aligning themselves with the opposition political parties. This signals a state of political polarisation among media practitioners, a situation which is of serious concern and requires urgent attention if the media sector is to be deemed credible enough. As stated in the previous discussion on political violence and harassment, political polarisation has ripple effects and tends to affect the independence of media outlets ¹⁰. This was also noted by one of the participants:

Media is reminded of its crucial responsibility of ensuring people are well informed so that they do not only make intelligent and informed choices but are also protected against falsehoods, fake news, character assassination and other acts of disinformation as the country approaches the 2021 general elections...journalists should, at all times, observe and uphold the fundamental tenets of journalism namely truth, balance and objectivity. The journalist's loyalty should be to the truth and to the people of Zambia and not to individuals and their narrow partisan interests. Media firms are further

⁹ The survey utilised a mixed methods approach which involved the administration of questionnaires in purposely sampled cities, focus group discussions, and panel discussions with media personnel.

¹⁰ This was also found in Manchishi, K. (2017). Defamation of the President and the law's effect on media performance. Unpublished master's dissertation. Lusaka: UNZA.

urged to place premium on retraining of their staff to avoid being at variance with other stakeholders. (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services)

Similarly, Joy Chula, Chairperson of the Lusaka Press Club, noted that:

The political environment continues to be volatile as media inclined to the party in Government are prone to harassment by the opposition political parties and vice versa for the media purported to be inclined to the opposition. However, the major thrust is the mistrust and suspicions around media and political parties.

Of particular interest, though, is the lack of trust in public media. This is a dire state of affairs because public media are expected to serve the wider population and cater for divergent interests of society. This is because public media are chiefly funded by tax payers and are entitled to government support. Also, governance structures of public media are amenable to a public process of appointment and ratification. Chiefly, public media are expected to fulfil principles of diversity, independence and distinctiveness which are actually cardinal characteristics¹¹. There is, therefore, need for a clear distinction between state-controlled media and public media. The former are usually remnant of the post-independence era and elements of the soviet-communist normative ideology that obtained in Zambia at the time.

However, given various changes over time (such as enactment of Acts to turn state media into public media), it is important that the media houses begin to implement real reforms in their operations. For many years in Zambia, stakeholders have advocated for balanced coverage from public institutions such as ZNBC, Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail to include divergent and dissenting views as opposed to only those favourable to the State¹². This is even more critical during electoral contests such as the forthcoming elections in 2021, when citizens should be provided with varied viewpoints in order to make informed decision.

see

https://www.zambiadailynation.com/2016/06/15/upnd-sues-znbc-for-rejecting-its-adverts/. Prior to this, in 2014, the party obtained a court order compelling ZNBC to start attending and covering its President's rallies ahead of the by-election in the same year, see https://zambianeye.com/upnd-gets-court-order-to-compel-znbc-to-cover-its-campaigns/

¹¹ According to the 2010 Zambia country edition of the AFRIMAP/OSISA Public broadcasting in Africa series which tracked the performance of public service broadcasters, including areas for improvement.

¹² For example, the opposition UPND applied for judicial review in 2016 in the Lusaka High Court over ZNBC's refusal of the party's advertisements,

It is hoped that government will expedite plans announced in 2019 to empower the Independent Broadcasting Authority to fully regulate public service broadcasters (such as ZNBC-which is also established by an Act of Parliament). Such a harmonisation of the Acts will help to hold public broadcasters accountable to particular standards in public interest. There is also need to develop a framework for other public media such as the state run newspapers even under the proposed Zambia Media Council Bill which is discussed further in the legal environment section below.

On the social front, the effects of the Coronavirus disease continued to affect the work of the media in gathering information for news and other programmes. The easing of restrictions (such as travel) by government was a positive move as it helped to begin a gradual return to normal operations even for media practitioners¹³.

However, the pandemic continued to inhibit the work of the media through the socioeconomic challenges it presented. According to a survey conducted by the Free Press Initiative during the quarter under review, most media houses in Zambia were not adequately prepared to counter the negative effects of the pandemic¹⁴. Some of the effects include job losses due to downscaling, loss of revenue and challenges related to programme production due to preventive measures, among others. A full analysis on the COVID-19 pandemic vis-à-vis the media in the quarter under review is undertaken in the economic environment section below. Commenting on the operational challenges posed by the effects of the pandemic, one of the interview participants, Joseph Mwenya, a Kabwe based journalist noted that:

Managing a newsroom when reporters are working from home is a real challenge, both technically and organizationally. For example, one may not have the facilities readily available such as Airtime and internet bundles to send a news item in a timely manner. Failure to meet sources has also led to airing stories that fall short of meeting the ingredients of a good news story

prepared by Free Press Initiative. According to the survey, 84% of the respondents reported that they were not prepared for the pandemic while 16% indicated average preparedness. Further, salary and job cuts were effected by 7.69% of the respondents, 38% had staff take time off work without pay and 23% downsized their operations.

¹³ See a summary of country restrictions at https://www.worldaware.com/covid-19-alertzambia-maintains-restrictions-commercial-flightsoperating

¹⁴ This is contained in a position paper on the impact of COVID-19 on Zambia's news media as

The pandemic also provided an opportunity for media to play a pivotal role of surveillance and supplementing government efforts especially in the dissemination of information on the outbreak. While in the previous quarter strenuous relations between government and Prime Television over COVID sensitisation led to the eventual blacklisting and closure of the station, the third quarter witnessed partnership between government and some media outlets. One such outlet is News Diggers Newspaper which partnered with government to offer free advertising, radio and television sponsorship for COVID-19 sensitisation programmes ¹⁵.

The action by News Diggers is a fulfilment of the role of the media in such critical times. The newspaper joins many other outlets that have dedicated space and airtime towards sensitisation messages on prevention of COVID-19. It is hoped that government will recognise the quintessential role media play during such times and create a conducive environment for them to flourish.



picture courtesy of Get Fit Zambia

Overall, the socio-political environment in the third quarter remained relatively unfree in view of the continued harassment and attacks on media outlets and practitioners. Further, the surge

¹⁵ https://diggers.news/local/2020/07/28/diggerspartners-with-ministry-of-information-to-escalatecovid-19-awareness-campaign/

of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the capability of the media to perform its functions undermined the socio-political environment.

However, the socio-political environment in the third quarter was relatively better than the second quarter mainly due to the fewer violations noted (including the intensity and ferocity of attacks). Further, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were partly mitigated by the opening up of several sectors and easing of restrictions by the government.

3.2. LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

The legal environment in the third quarter was engulfed by continued debates over the Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 10 which could not be tabled in Parliament in the quarter due to an abrupt *sine die* adjournment owing to the coronavirus pandemic¹⁶. In this regard, several programmes aired on various media outlets discussing the Bill. As with the first and second quarters, the media did not offer much analysis on the contents of the Bill as observed in the content analysis of various media products. What was witnessed instead were single sourced news stories lacking in-depth analysis of the relevant issues. It is important for media to offer critical analysis and help to breakdown complex matters for the public.

The most notable occurrence in the quarter, however, was the approval of the Zambia Council for Journalists Bill by Cabinet on 30th July. This was announced to the nation by Chief Government Spokesperson, Dora Siliya, who provided an update after the 17th Cabinet meeting¹⁷.

The Bill, which is an outcome of meetings held by and among media practitioners, seeks to establish a media self-regulatory council and prescribe criteria for regulation of journalists in the country. The Bill was drafted under the auspices of the Technical Working Group which comprised members from various media organisations. MISA Zambia facilitated financial support

<u>net-approves-bill-for-journalists-self-regulatory-body/</u>

¹⁶ See https://diggers.news/local/2020/09/07/bill-10-will-be-tabled-in-next-parliament-sitting-clerk/

¹⁷ As reported by the Mast Newspaper, see https://www.themastonline.com/2020/07/29/cabi

towards this cause to ensure media freedom through a self-media regulatory framework that was developed and agreed to by the Zambian media.

The move by Cabinet to approve the Bill is commendable and a step forward for the media fraternity which has been gripped with several issues among them political violence and harassment, unprofessionalism, high level of



Picture courtesy of MISA Zambia

political polarisation and exploitation among others. Despite the benefits expected to accrue from the proposed media regulation Bill, it is pertinent that certain considerations are taken into account going forward.

Firstly, it is important that the content of the Bill is safeguarded as agreed by the various consultative meetings representing consensus among media practitioners. This is so because as has been the case with some other Bills, particular contents and provisions of a Bill can be changed prior to its presentation in Parliament. Moreover, the Bill is still amenable to various changes as it undergoes the processes of legislation in Parliament. Such changes may insert or remove particular clauses that may be inimical to media freedom.

This is against a backdrop of several clawback clauses that already undermine media freedom ¹⁸. Among the legal provisions that stifle press freedom are the law on defamation of the President (Section 69 of the Penal Code), Seditious Practices (Section 60 of the Penal Code), State Security Act (Chapter 111 of the Laws of Zambia) and Prohibited Publications (Section 53 of the Penal Code), among others. As such, if the content of the Bill is not safeguarded, it risks joining the long list of laws that stifle freedom of the press.

In effect, the route chosen by the media fraternity is a regulatory model that falls under co-regulation, where the media agree on the standards and government merely provides the framework for enacting the standards into law without necessarily interfering with the content. It is, essentially, a hybrid of self and statutory regulation¹⁹. It is, therefore, important that this process is respected by all parties involved.

Secondly, the arbitrary actions (such as the closure of Prime Television) witnessed in past quarters and documented in State of the Media Reports at the hand of government regulatory agencies such as ZICTA and IBA cast aspersions on the independence and autonomy of the proposed regulatory council. As such, it is also critical that government understands the need for independence of the self-regulatory process which thrives on autonomy as already envisaged in the proposed Bill.

Some practitioners have equally raised concerns on the efficacy of media regulation, especially that it is a field without clearly defined boundaries and dealing with a very fluid tenet of freedom of expression. Others have raised

19 See

https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/media2002/reports/EP3Cishecki.PDF

¹⁸ According to Nkandu, E. (2012). A report on study of media laws and policies in Zambia. Lusaka: European Union/Diakonia/Media Institute of Southern Africa

fears of punitive action targeted at particular media houses that provide a platform for dissenting views²⁰.

There is, therefore, need for media practitioners, media organisations and other stakeholders alike to follow the process keenly, especially that the country goes to the polls in 2021, a time when the media will be expected to perform a critical role in enabling the masses to make an informed choice.

The quarter under review also witnessed a legal victory when the Lusaka High Court dismissed a case in which the National Pensions Scheme Authority (NAPSA) sued News Diggers Media Limited and ADD president Charles Milupi for defamation in a publication that allegedly accused it of corruption and mismanagement of members' funds. High Court Judge Sharon Newa noted that a corporate body could not commit the offence of corruption, although its officers could and, therefore, no cause of action had been revealed on which NAPSA could attach liability on Milupi and News Diggers. She therefore dismissed the action for want of cause of action.

This is indeed a significant victory given that the media are expected to fulfil a watchdog role, keeping public institutions in check in public interest²¹. Such public bodies are funded by tax payers and are, thus, answerable to the

²⁰ As argued in a News Diggers newspaper editorial of 4th August under the title "media regulation Bill was drafted without research"

²¹ As suggested in Norris, P. (2010). A virtuous circle: political communications in post-industrial societies. New York: Cambridge University Press.

public and should be willing to be held accountable for their actions and/or inaction.



Picture courtesy of The Judiciary of Zambia

Likewise, media houses must also be willing to be held accountable for their publications and this must be done through the due process of the law such as through the courts of law. The danger of such litigation, however, is the resultant chilling effect, particularly that presented by defamation law suits²².

ACCESS TO INFORMATION BILL

During the quarter under review, there was no progress recorded on the enactment of the Access to Information Bill, a situation which indicates no change from the previous quarter in which no pronouncements were recorded either. The ATI Bill has stalled since it was first mooted in the early 2002 with several pronouncements made by different regimes but all in vain²³. It is saddening that another session of the National Assembly elapsed in the quarter without enactment of the Bill despite nearly two decades of lobbying and advocacy. Further, history is about to repeat itself as another term of office comes to end and election campaigns begin, with

²² According to findings by Chris Dent and Andrew Kenyon in a study on defamation law's chilling effect. See

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/22819
1802 Defamation Law's Chilling Effect A Comparative Content Analysis of Australian and US
Newspapers. Similar findings were recorded in a

study on the Defamation of the President and the law's effect on media performance in Zambia. See http://dspace.unza.zm/handle/123456789/5545

²³ Some of the pronouncements recorded since 2011 are archived at

https://zambiareports.com/2018/05/04/sevenyears-story-information-bill/

political party manifestos expected to promise enactment of the ATI Bill once elected into office.



The law on Access to Information is critical for the enhancement of transparency, accountability and the role of the media, all of which are essential in a liberal democracy²⁴. Further, such a law could help to alleviate vices such as corruption which thrive in an environment of secrecy. One of the interview participants, a Livingstone-based journalist, highlighted the value of access to information for the media, stating that:

For the media to develop, Journalists should have access to information in order to objectively and truthfully report on the happenings and assured of protection against warring political parties. Journalists should also build on skills to be objective, analytical and balanced with a view to develop the country than destroy through inflammatory reports

https://www.cartercenter.org/documents/2012.p

²⁴ See

Overall, the legal environment in the quarter under review was neutral as certain relatively positive significant trends were observed. These included the approval of the Media Council Bill, which could benefit the media fraternity by providing protection and improving standards. Further, victories observed in cases such as that between NAPSA and News Diggers Newspaper as well as the absence of new legislation aimed at stifling freedom of the press augmented the status of the legal environment in the quarter. The legal environment in the third quarter was clearly much better than that witnessed in the first and second quarters of the year in which certain negative trends were observed. In both quarters, however, the lack of progress on enactment of the ATI Bill remained an issue of paramount concern.

3.3. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

In the quarter under review, the economic environment remained in turmoil, with most economic variables posting poor performance that in turn affected the economy negatively.

This is evidenced by projection of contraction of the economy by 4.2% in 2020 instead of 2.6% ²⁵ expected earlier, with many sectors of the economy affected, among them tourism, wholesale and retail trade and construction.

This state of affairs was exacerbated by a significant decline in consumer and investment spending due to disruption in business operations, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic among other factors²⁶.

Further, the rate of inflation in the quarter under review increased to an average of 16.1% from an average of 13.5% in the second quarter, mainly attributed to depreciation of the Kwacha against the dollar and other major convertible currencies. For example, at the beginning of the quarter on 1st July, the Kwacha traded at K18.12 against the dollar and later depreciated to K 20.04 at the close of the quarter on 31st August.

the nineteenth consecutive month in September, albeit at the slowest pace since February. The rate of decline was much softer than May's record, but panellists continued to report a lack of demand. The full index report is available at https://corporateandinvestment.standardbank.co

²⁵ As monitored in the Bank of Zambia Monetary Policy Committee Statement of August, 2020. See https://www.boz.zm/monetary_policy_committee_statement_august_2020.pdf. See also the Monthly bulletin for September, 2020 issued by the Zambia Statistics Agency.

²⁶ According to the Stanbic Zambia Bank Purchasing Manager's Index New orders fell for

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There was, also, in the quarter under review, a decline in credit extended to the private sector owing to reduced appetite by banks to lend money because of heightened default risk due to a slump in economic activity²⁷.

This bleak economic outlook negatively affected the media in the quarter under review as most media houses are heavily dependent on advertising revenue to support their operations. As such, a reduction in economic activity entailed a reduction in advertising by the producers of goods and services as there was reduced demand from the consumers. This was further worsened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which had socio-economic effects such as reduced productivity due to reduction in the workforce in order to implement preventive measures. For some media houses, this entailed reducing the number of staff reporting to the station even for news gathering and production activities²⁸. In spite of this situation, obligations



²⁷ This was in spite of a slight decline in commercial interest rates as reported in the BOZ August Monetary Policy Statement

prepared by Free Press Initiative, at least 7% of the media houses effected salary and job cuts, 38% had staff take time off work without pay and 23% downsized operations.

²⁸ According to a survey in a position paper on the impact of COVID-19 on Zambia's news media

such as license fees, copyright, tax and other statutory obligations were still collected from media outlets, thereby straining the few resources at their disposal.

Also, the media were affected by the depreciation of the Kwacha because major inputs in the operations of the media are imported at high cost. Examples of these inputs include newsprint, audio-visual equipment and international news and entertainment programmes, among others. As such, the depreciation of the Kwacha increased the cost of these inputs (which is already high) to astronomical levels. It is for this reason that some scholars have called for a review of the sustainability of media outlets, particularly newspapers²⁹. This is further validated by findings of the 2019/2020 regional 'Trust in the media report' conducted by MISA, where print magazines have suffered most in terms of the negative impact of the transforming media landscape across Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi and remain largely inexistent.

The decline in credit lending appetite by banking institutions also negatively affected media houses as they could not easily access capital funding for various activities against the backdrop of reduced advertising revenue. This, therefore, meant media houses had to temporarily put some of their planned activities on hold. For some media houses, the need to reduce the number of staff became imminent, a situation which is dire for the many employees that had to be laid-off. All the interview participants pointed out the dire effect of the negative economic conditions on the media in the country.

As with the previous quarter and unlike other sectors such as the arts, no facility was made available and specifically tailored for the media sector in view of the economic shocks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, none of the stimulus packages and initiatives rolled out by the government to cushion the impact of the pandemic³⁰ had any direct benefit to

national address on 25th June, 2020 included a K10 billion medium term refinancing facility meant to restructure, refinance or extend credit to businesses and households impacted by COVID-19 and issuance of a COVID-19 bond amounting to K8 billion as a stimulus package to enhance economic activity. The full speech is available at https://www.mof.gov.zm/?wpfb_dl=244

²⁹ Such as Banda, F. (2004). Newspapers and magazines-a question of sustainability. Lusaka: MISA. Additionally, according to the Free Press Initiative survey on the impact of COVID-19 on Zambia's news media, newspapers were identified as being most affected by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

³⁰ Some of the measures as announced in the previous quarter by President Edgar Lungu in a

the media sector which has its own peculiarities with regard to economic sustainability and revenue generation³¹.

There is need for a specific stimulus package to be created for the media sector which facilitates information dissemination and supports the functioning of democratic governance in the country through access to information and providing a platform for citizens to express their views, among other functions. It is important that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance) designs a specific empowerment programme in view of the many economic challenges the sector is currently facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic³².

This is a position equally expressed by other stakeholders in the quarter under review. For example, the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) called on government to develop a specific stimulus package for the media which is a critical sector. The organisation noted that leaving the media to face the harsh economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic posed a risk of affecting freedom of expression, which the media are a key facilitator³³.

Other factors that were noted in the economic environment in the quarter under review include the continuation of electricity load management, which led to power rationing, with an average of 6-8 hours of power cuts daily³⁴. The load shedding negatively affected media houses as they

https://www.lusakatimes.com/2020/08/20/dorasiliya-urges-media-houses-to-apply-for-the-governments-stimulus-packages/

³¹ A summary of government measures in response to COVID-19 can viewed on this brief compiled by KPMG:

https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/zambia-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html

³² On August 20, Information Minister, Dora Siliya, regardless, urged media houses to take advantage of the stimulus packages launched by government to help their businesses transition the Covid-19 era. Ms. Siliya said Government was aware that all businesses are suffering the adverse effects of Covid-19 and that media houses have not been spared. She further said media organisations should start thinking of themselves as business entities and come up with innovations on how to survive the decline of revenue incurred. See the full story at

³³ This is according to a report monitored in the Daily Nation Newspaper of 12th August. YALI President Andrew Ntewewe urged the government to think broadly on the issue of the stimulus package and include the media especially as the country heads towards the 2021 general elections. Mr Ntewewe said the media has had challenges over the years which have become worse with the outbreak of Covid-19. He highlighted high taxation and the high cost of publishing newspapers for the print media as some of the challenges faced by the media houses.

³⁴ According to a statement issued by Zesco on 3rd September, load management hours were expected to reduce to six hours per day, from the 8-12 hours experienced in the previous months. The load management was attributed to a limitation in power generation caused by low water levels at the company's major hydropower plants.

had to resort to the use of alternative sources of electricity, chief among them generators. This is because most media operations rely on equipment that requires uninterrupted power supply. This includes equipment such as transmitters, studio control units and industrial print presses, among others. As such, interruption of electricity supply puts the media outlets off-air or delays printing of newspapers (with a lot of wastage in some cases), leading to major losses.

Additionally, the cost of maintaining alternative electricity sources such as generators remained high due to the cost of fuel, an essential commodity.

Overall, the economic environment in the third quarter remained unstable in view of the many economic variables that were in a state of flux, thereby negatively impacting the economic sustainability of media operations with an uncertain outlook. This status is no different from the economic environment in the second quarter which was equally unstable and also experienced economic shocks that negatively impacted media operations. Similar trends of currency volatility, reduced economic activity and consumer spending (which affected advertising revenue), reduced appetite for credit by banks and continued electricity load management were existent in both quarters. This is despite an insignificant (marginal) improvement in certain economic variables.

3.4. TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The technological environment in the quarter under review was somewhat reminiscent of the first and second quarters, based on a number of occurrences observed.

Most notable on the technological front was the 'regulatory turf war' involving the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and Spring Television, an online broadcast station after the latter aired a misleading story involving former Minister of General Education, David Mabumba on 29th July.

Following the broadcast by Spring TV, the IBA, through its Director-General, Josephine Mapoma, issued the following statement on 30th July³⁵:

³⁵ As circulated by the IBA and also shared on the official Facebook page.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is dismayed by the false reporting of an online television station Spring TV which went viral yesterday and wishes to clarify that Spring TV is not licensed by the Authority and as such not bound by its regulations.

The IBA Act does not provide for the regulation of content broadcast over the internet. In that regard, IBA has no jurisdiction to take any action against the station for any wrong doing or alleged peddling of rumours. That notwithstanding, IBA stands with various stakeholders to condemn the

false reporting that happens on the Internet and wishes to urge all media practitioners to abide by the journalism code of ethics.

Further, perpetrators of such falsehoods can face the consequences of their actions under the constitution and other laws of the Republic of Zambia. While every news channel would love to be the first to give breaking news to

the public, the same should not be at the expense of accuracy and verification of facts which is a key characteristic of journalism ethical practice.

Barely a week after this initial statement, the Authority's Board Chairperson, Mable Mung'omba issued a contradictory statement, claiming jurisdiction over regulation of online broadcasting on 7th August:

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) issued a press statement on 30 July, 2020 regarding the status of Spring TV and the regulation pertaining to online broadcasting.

The said statement was issued in the context that Spring TV is not a licensee of the IBA. Spring TV, like any other broadcasting service provider, is bound by sections 19(1) of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (Amendment) Act No.26 of 2010 which prohibits the operation or the provision of a broadcasting service in Zambia without a broadcasting licence.

Accordingly, section 2 of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act no. 17 of 2002 (as amended by Act No. 26 of 2010) defines broadcasting as "any form of uni-directional electronic communication intended for reception by-

- (a) the public;
- (b) sections of the public; or
- (c) subscribers to any broadcasting service, whether conveyed by means of radio frequency spectrum or any electronic communications network or any combination thereof".

Therefore, any person wishing to operate or provide a broadcasting service in Zambia, regardless of whether the broadcasting service is conveyed through radio frequency spectrum or any electronic communications network such as the internet, is required to obtain a broadcasting licence from the IBA.

Operating without a broadcasting licence amounts to an offence punishable under section 19(2) of the IBA Act.

The realm of the internet (and social networking) and its resultant effect on conventional media broadcasting cannot be overstated. The medium and its specific characteristics of interactivity, anonymity, multimedia capability and accessibility have reshaped the practice of mass communication and it is no surprise that the issue of broadcasting using online platforms has risen in Zambia. This is in view of the IBA, which is legally mandated to regulate broadcasting activities as spelled out in the IBA Act of 2002 (amended in 2010).

However, some of the provisions of the Act are debatable with regard to regulation of content broadcast on social media platforms, even though the Authority superintends and licenses some content service providers and broadcasters through Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), such as Airtel TV.

Notwithstanding the unethical nature of the misleading story aired by Spring TV, 'broadcasts' made over social networking platforms using live streaming such as that provided by Facebook, a social network, presents a different set of challenges, even in terms of liability.

The first consideration is a set of questions revolving around what exactly should be deemed as broadcasting: does an initiative by an individual using a free platform such as Facebook to stream programmes and content amount to broadcasting? What criteria will be used to differentiate professional livestreams of concerts, church programmes, personal opinions, music shows, interviews and so on, with at least 2.5 million users on Facebook alone in

Zambia³⁶? Does it mean all the 2.5 million people (including churches, companies and other entities) would have to be licensed by the IBA if they were to stream content on their Facebook pages? How will other users streaming live and pre-recorded content on video sites such as YouTube and other platforms be treated? What about content streamed on a social network from a different geographical and legal jurisdiction but still accessed by the Zambian public? What will be the responsibility and role of internet intermediaries³⁷ and will they also be accountable to the Authority³⁸?

The second consideration revolves around the provisions of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Act 15 of 2009 (as amended by Act No. 3 of 2010) as well as the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 21 of 2009 both of which are superintended over by the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA). The Acts, in addition to other statutes, empower ZICTA with the mandate to regulate various information and communication technologies, including those that are internet based. As such, any offences committed by any internet user, such as the individuals behind Spring TV, would rightly be handled by ZICTA or particular law enforcement agencies depending on the nature of the offence. The move by the IBA to claim jurisdiction over content shared on a social networking platform-such as Facebook-has the potential to create a legal and professional conundrum with far-reaching consequences.

What is needed, instead, is a careful review of the IBA Act to bring it up to date with the changes in technology while harmonising the same with existing provisions under the ICT Act and the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act. It is, therefore, no wonder that the

https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/apc%E2%80%99s-frequently-asked-questions-internet-intermed

³⁶ See https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-zambia/2020/09

³⁷ An internet intermediary is an entity which provides services that enable people to use the internet. There are many different kinds of internet intermediaries which fall into two broad categories: "conduits" and "hosts". "Conduits" are technical providers of internet access or transmission services. Conduits do not interfere with the content they are transmitting other than for automatic, intermediate or transient storage needed for transmission. "Hosts" are providers of content services – for instance, online platforms and storage services. Read more at

³⁸ Internet intermediary liability" means the legal responsibility ("liability") of intermediaries for illegal or harmful activities performed by users through their services. "Liability" means that intermediaries have an obligation to prevent the occurrence of unlawful or harmful activity by users of their services. Failure to do so may result in legal orders compelling the intermediary to act or expose the intermediary to civil or criminal legal action. See https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/apc%E2%80%99s-frequently-asked-questions-internet-intermed

IBA found itself oscillating between the two positions as to whether it has authority over content exclusively streamed on a social networking platform.

Other notable issues within the quarter under review include the findings of the MISA regional 'Trust in the media' survey, which found, among others, that social media was seen to have generally lowered the standards of journalism across the three countries surveyed i.e. Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. The study generally established that fake news is mostly prevalent on social media and on some online news platforms most of which are not known as to where they are domiciled³⁹.

This is a saddening state of affairs indeed as several stakeholders, government inclusive, have raised alarm over the increasing abuses on social media. It is, therefore, no wonder that there is very little trust from the public, given the high rate of fake news by 'news sites' that have mushroomed and are in many cases run by untrained individuals. It is important that the traditional media equally increase their online presence to offer credible, verified and trustworthy information. Further, the law must be allowed to take its course and perpetrators of online crimes brought to book; nonetheless, the situation must not be used as an excuse to stifle the freedom of expression and victimise those seen to propagate dissenting views online. The findings on fake news were echoed by one of the interview participants, Joseph Mwenya, a Kabwe-based journalist who said:

People spending so much time at home turned them into de facto journalists posting fake news and unverified stories online about covid-19 and other issues which made it extremely difficult for media houses to work. People would see unverified stories on social media and created some confusion when media houses aired a story different from what was trending on social media.

On a positive note, communication technology platforms were used during the quarter to alleviate some of the challenges facing society. One such instance is the USAID's launch of radio broadcasts of pre-recorded, interactive lessons to reach students, teachers, and parents as

credible. Despite some of the online news websites being run by traditional media institutions in all the three countries, in Zambia and Malawi, the level of trust attached to this particular media type is relatively lower.

³⁹ The study also established that most online platforms that are in the habit of promulgating fake news are not locally based and that most locally based online news websites are quite

well as audio tips for teachers to ensure continued literacy instructional and professional support in the wake of COVID-19⁴⁰. Such a move is a step in the right direction and adds to other initiative such as the government's launch of a dedicated education channel for secondary school learners in the previous quarter⁴¹. This is positive use of media platforms, in keeping with the main functions of mass communication.

On an equally positive note, on 26th August, ZICTA fined the three mobile service operators a total of K5.4 million for failure to adhere to the quality of service guidelines issued in the previous quarter ⁴²⁴³. Such enforcement of compliance measures and guidelines by the Authority will help to improve service delivery, particularly of internet services which are vital even in media operations.

Overall, the technological environment in the third quarter was stable given some of the positive developments recorded during the quarter-a marginal improvement when compared to the previous quarter which was found to be relatively stable. With regard to freedom of expression online, however, the environment remained relatively weak, particularly dented by the threats against citizens expressing dissenting views online, as well as the arbitrary application of laws such as the alleged powers of the IBA to regulate the streaming ('broadcasting') of content through social networks.

4.0. CONCLUSION

The review in this report has shown that there has not been much change between events of the second quarter and the quarter under review. This is because the state of the media remained unstable (despite minor improvement) in view of the many observations highlighted above. The effect of the occurrences under key thematic areas cannot be overemphasised, especially in view of the critical role the media were expected to play amidst the turmoil obtaining.

For example, on the socio-political front, high levels of political violence against media outlets deemed to carry dissenting views was rampant. This is a situation of concern particularly because of the chilling effect that it has on media outlets that will black out divergent views in

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 $^{^{\}rm 40}$ As reported by News Diggers Newspaper on $\rm 6^{\rm th}$ August, 2020.

⁴¹ See https://www.znbc.co.zm/news/znbc-to-open-education-channel/

⁴³ The fines were for call setup success rate, drop rate, HTTP download rate on 3G and HTTP successful internet log-ins, with Airtel Zambia receiving the biggest fine of K4.8 million.

fear of political retribution. Also of concern is the issue of political polarisation among media houses as well as the abuse of public media which are mandated to serve the wider interests of society.

The economic front is by far the most chilling of all sectors given the harsh economic conditions under which the media operated. These conditions include depreciation of the Kwacha, reduced consumer spending and business activity, lack of access to capital, high cost of doing business, effects of the corona pandemic and electricity load shedding among others. This state of affairs rendered the economic independence of media houses weak. This further affects press freedom which is comprised of economic freedom and editorial independence among other factors.

In terms of the technological environment, some minor improvement was noted in view of some of the gains recorded, including the use of new technology for the greater good. With regard to freedom of expression online, the situation remained dire, particularly dented by the use of legislation to arbitrarily stifle the freedom of expression of particular institutions and individuals using social platforms to express dissenting views.

It is, therefore, critical that insight is drawn from the findings in line with the recommendations highlighted herein.

Safeguarding the sustainability of media enterprises

5.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

the National Arts Council

i.

- Given the negative economic trends observed in the quarter, it is critical that a stimulus package is introduced and other empowerment schemes also take into cognisant the needs of the media sector. Deliberate moves must be taken through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to develop a package of incentives (tax, non-tax, empowerment) to bail out media houses from what is expected to be a tough year economically. There must be, as a matter of urgency, creation of a specific media stimulus package just like that created for the arts industry through
- Need for professionalism and adherence to media ethics
 There is need for the media (both public and private) to adhere to professional codes
 of journalism and basic tenets such as objectivity, balance, fairness and the public

interest. These tenets are critical if the media are to serve the public and contribute to the attainment of functional democracy.

iii. Enactment of Media regulation and Access to Information Bills

As a step forward, it is critical that the Access to Information Bill is enacted to improve ability of citizens to hold their government accountable. While consensus has been reached and Cabinet has approved the ZAMEC Bill for presentation to Parliament, it is critical that the enactment be approached cautiously with a guarantee of independence given some of the compromising traits observed in the existing regulatory institutions during the quarter under review. This is also in view of several existing laws that already stifle the freedom of expression.

iv. Enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct.

Stakeholders, including the ECZ, must ensure provisions of the Code are enforced with specific consideration of journalists who bear the brunt of electoral violence and attacks. This is critical because the country will soon commence activities of the electoral cycle such as voter registration and delimitation. Given the patterns observed in the first, second and third quarters of 2020, it is important that enforcement of the Code is upped during the forthcoming elections and dialogue meetings arranged to educate electoral players on the need to safeguard media freedom.

v. Enhancement of autonomy and Independence of the IBA

It is critical that independence of the IBA is guaranteed and the institution be given the necessary autonomy even in practice to professionally handle matters related to the broadcasting sector. This includes harmonisation of the IBA and ZNBC Acts to enable the Authority fully regulate ZNBC and other public broadcasters. Further, clarity must be provided on the status of the IBA Act with regard to regulation of broadcasting via social networks and the existing mandate of ZICTA.

vi. Review of laws inimical to freedom of expression

There is need for review of laws that continue to hinder the enjoyment of freedom of expression and other civil liberties as guaranteed by the Constitution. Further, there is need to make adequate provision for the protection of journalists and media outlets in view of the increased incidence of political violence and harassment.

6.0. APPENDICES

review?

6.1. INTERVIEW GUIDE/QUESTIONNAIRE

MISA ZAMBIA STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT QUARTER 3 (July-September) 2020

Dear respondent, MISA Zambia conducts a quarterly review of the state of the media in Zambia, detailing trends in the political, legal, economic and technological operating environment. In this regard, your assistance and input by response to the questions below will be of utmost help in compilation of reports for the third quarter of 2020. Ensure to give as much information as clearly as possible. The information collected is solely for the purpose of the State of the Media reports.

	of the Media reports.
Name deman	
Date	//2020
1.	How would you describe the level of freedom of expression and of media in the third quarter of 2020?
2.	How would you describe the following aspects with regard to the media a. Political environment
	b. Economic environment
	c. Legal environment
3.	What are some of the challenges you have observed with regard to media freedom in the two quarters under review?
4.	What are your general comments on the state of the media in the quarters under

STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT QUARTER 3. 2020

5. Based on your observations, what are your recommendations for media development?
6.2. QUESTIONNAIRE-MEDIA HOUSES
MISA ZAMBIA
STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT
QUARTER 3 (July-September) 2020
Dear respondent, MISA Zambia conducts a quarterly review of the state of the media in Zambia, detailing trends in the political, legal, economic and technological operating environment. In this regard, your assistance and input by response to the questions below will be of utmost help in compilation of a report for the third quarter of 2020. Ensure to give a much information as clearly as possible. Kindly tick the appropriate option.
 Name of media outlet
Other (specify)
5. What is your average monthly revenue generated? Less than K20, 000 K20, 100-K40, 000 K40, 100-K60, 000
K60, 100-K80, 000 K80, 100-100, 000 Above K 100, 000 6. Have you experienced any reduction in monthly revenue since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic in Zambia? Yes No Not Sure 7. If yes, how much reduction have you experienced on average (percentage)?
8. Which of the following socioeconomic effects of the corona virus pandemic have affected your outlet?
Reduction in workforce due to layoffs/rotational work schedules

STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT QUARTER 3. 2020

Difficulty in conducting field interviews and hosting interview programmes
Increased operational costs (such as purchase of personal protective equipment)
O. List any major shallonges you have found during the greater under review
9. List any major challenges you have faced during the quarter under review
10. What are your consul comments on the state of the modic in Zambia in country 2
10. What are your general comments on the state of the media in Zambia in quarter 2 (July-September) 2020 in terms of the following:
a. Political environment
b. Economic environment
c. Technological environment

6.3. ALERTS AND COMMUNIQUES

Communique-1st July (ZNBC)

Former Post Newspapers Editor-In-Chief FRED M'MEMBE has been arrested by Police in Chinsali, Muchinga Province on three charges related to the now defunct newspaper. Muchinga Province Police Commissioner JOEL NJASE has told ZNBC News that Dr. M'MEMBE, who is now Socialist Party President, has been arrested and charged for being found with property suspected to be proceeds of crime.

Mr NJASE further says Dr. M'MEMBE has also been charged for theft as Director and fraudulently appropriating property as Director. He says the arrest follows a complaint by Post Newspapers Liquidator LEWIS MOSHO. Dr. M'MEMBE has since been released on police bond and will appear in court soon.

Communique-1st July (ZNBC)

United States Chargé d'Affaires, David Young say the USA and Zambia cherishes the Freedom of Expression. Mr. Young, however, says Freedom of expression and protests should be exercised responsibly.

He says much as people are free to protest and express themselves, they should do this in a peaceful and respectful manner. Mr. Young has told Journalists after meeting Information and Broadcasting Minister Dora Siliya that Freedom of Expression and protests become bad when it borders on incitement.

He said government believes in Freedom of expression and protests because they are key to the growth of democracy. Mr. Young said that those who hold public offices must be ready to be criticized. And Ms Siliya said people are free to express themselves but this should be done within the law.

She said one's freedom of expression should not injure the next person.

Alert-11th July (News Diggers)

UNITED States Embassy Chargé d'Affairs David Young says it is unfortunate that in Zambia today, it is frowned upon to say anything critical about government or leaders without risking being censored or threatened with arrest.

And Young has condemned Kabwe Central PF member of parliament for threatening to break protesting youths' bones.

Speaking during a digital American Independence day celebration held by the American embassy on July 4, Young noted that anyone who occupies public office should be willing to be criticized; fairly and unfairly.

"It is unfortunate in Zambia today that it is frowned upon to say anything critical about seeing your government leaders or problems in government without risking being censored or even threatened with arrests. The first of reservists for freedoms is freedom of speech and in many ways, it is the foundational of civil and political rights. It is central to all freedoms, expression through the press, assembly, peaceful protests, belief. If you can't say what you believe, you aren't truly free. Today, freedom of speech is under threat around the world. In many countries,

you risk imprisonment for simply voicing your opinion which is the violation of the basic tenet of liberty.

Now freedom of speech is often difficult because at its core, it requires that people who decide to go into public life must tolerate criticism from all corners. Whether you are a mayor, a police chief, a diplomat or a national leader, democracy requires you to sign up for public criticism. If you want to have political power and influence and status and responsibilities of public office, you have to be willing to be criticized fairly and unfairly sometimes you might even be called names", his sentiments read in part.

Alert-12th July (Kalemba)

INSPECTOR General of Police Kakoma Kanganja has warned political party cadres against attacking radio stations to disrupt programmes featuring political figures. Kanganja also says "individuals" without cases at courts of law should stay away especially during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. PF cadres have recently adopted a habit of storming radio stations to disrupt programmes featuring opposition party leaders.

In May this year, ruling party cadres violently invaded Isoka Community Radio Station and Muchinga FM and disrupted a programme featuring UPND leader Hakainde Hichilema. In March last year, PF cadres blocked Democratic Party president Harry Kalaba from entering Radio Chengelo where he was scheduled to have an interview.

And in April last year, PF cadres attacked NDC president Chishimba Kambwili during a live radio programme on Power FM in Kabwe. Continuing the same trend, PF cadres on Friday attacked Mafken Radio in Mufulira where Hichilema was being interviewed, but were beaten by residents. In a statement this afternoon, Kanganja said the trend of attacking radio stations should come to an end.

"The growing trend of thugs attacking radio stations under the guise of politics is criminal and should come to an end forthwith," Kanganja stated. He said any person who felt offended by the content of any interview should follow the due process of the law by registering their grievances to the police or other relevant authorities and not taking the law into their own hands. Kanganja also warned that police would ensure that only those with cases in court access court premises.

Last Thursday, PF cadres who turned up to offer solidarity to corruption-accused health minister Chitalu Chilufya and caused commotion at the Lusaka Magistrates' Court, leading to an adjournment of proceedings without him taking plea.

Alert Update-15th July (Lusaka Times)

President of the opposition NDC Chishimba Kambwili says Lusaka Province Minister Bowman Lusambo and Copperbelt PF Chairman Nathan Chanda are behind the attacks on Mafken Radio in Mufulira. Mr Kambwili says it is a shame that despite being aware of the incident, Copperbelt Police Commissioner Charity Katanga has not done anything to bring the culprits to book.

He has questioned the silence by the International Community allowing Zambia to degenerate into a banana republic because of President Edgar Lungu. Mr Kambwili said President Lungu must be ashamed to allow Mr Lusambo and Mr Chanda to ferry cadres to Mufulira openly carrying pangas threatening innocent citizens.

He has challenged the President to bring the violence to an end saying Presidential powers are not in perpetuity. Mr Kambwili said the misbehavior of PF cadres disrupting radio programs must come to an end because the country does not belong to PF but every Zambian.

He said President Lungu must use the presidency to develop Zambia and not to intimidate Zambians. Mr Kambwili has pleaded with Zambians to vote President Lungu out of office next year to allow him to go back to Chawama.

Communique-22nd July (Valley FM)

Threatened

On 22/07/2020, MISA Zambia received a report through a letter from Valley FM indicating that the radio station was visited by ZICTA inspectors on 27th June 2020 who demanded for a valid transmission certificate which was not in place because the institution has not yet paid the authority.

Following this development, the station was left off air as the inspector confiscated the transmitter. Valley FM, through the station manager Cephas Mumba, informed MISA Zambia that efforts have been made to pay the authority for the transmitter to be returned. However, the authority has not granted the station's request because the authority is alleging that the report is not ready.

In addition, Mr Mumba said the transmitter in question was procured through hire purchase and the station is still paying for it. Therefore, its confiscation and subsequent lack of business wrought by the station being off air may lead to non-payment for the equipment. He therefore appealed to MISA Zambia to assist it recover the seized transmitter as soon as possible to facilitate the station going back on air.

Communique-27th July (Lusaka Times)

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services Permanent Secretary Amos Malupenga has commended MISA Zambia and its partners for undertaking a survey to determine public trust in the media.

Mr. Malupenga says the report is important as it will help the media to assess their relationship with the public to whom their loyalty must be. He says among other issues, the report highlights biasness, media capture, and political polarisation as some of the reasons for loss of public trust and confidence in the media. Mr. Malupenga says the report also cites inaccurate media coverage and lack of in-depth analysis of issues as some of the reason for the erosion of public trust in the media.

He said the report therefore, serves as a timely reminder for the media in Zambia to be professional at every given time and to ensure that professional ethics remain key guiding principles in their operations.

Mr. Malupenga said the findings of the report also vindicate Government's persistent call for professionalism and strict adherence to professional ethics by the media which in some circles, have been misunderstood as efforts to gag the media.

He said Government has no reason, whatsoever, to hinder the media or journalists from doing their job but want to ensure that enough space and latitude is provided for them to do their work in a much more professional manner because society depends on them for information on various issues affecting their wellbeing.

Mr. Malupenga said it is not in dispute that the media play an important role of informing, educating and entertaining the public but this role calls for the highest levels of professionalism anchored on key fundamentals of truth, objectivity, fairness, credibility and fact.

Speaking during the launch of the Trust in the Media Baseline Report, Mr. Malupenga said Public trust is fundamental in the success of the Journalism profession.

He said sadly, countries world-over, including Zambia, is a victim of fake news which has 'poisoned' the bloodstream of our societies – undermining trust and destabilizing democracy.

Communique-30th July (The Mast)

CABINET has approved in principle the introduction of a bill in Parliament to provide for the establishment of a self-regulatory professional body for journalists.

In a statement issued by chief government spokesperson Dora Siliya on the decisions made by Cabinet at the 17th cabinet meeting (continuation) held at State House, stakeholders had generally complained that a phenomenon where every person feels that they could practice journalism and do so willingly without observing the minimum standards cannot go unchallenged. Siliya said there was a great desire among the stakeholders to save the credibility of the media.

She said the establishment of the Zambia Council for Journalists would provide a legal framework for the journalism profession to thrive making it more effective and efficient. Siliya said journalists would have confidence in their work considering that they were protected and further, it would protect the profession and ensure that there was professional reporting especially with the advent of social media.

She said the legislation would provide for soberness and sanity by journalists. Siliya said Cabinet approved the Media Development Policy in order to deal with the challenges that are constraining the development of the media industry in Zambia.

"As a result of liberalisation, the media industry has grown significantly and continues to do so. With this growth, comes attendant challenges that must be tackled through a comprehensive policy framework - challenges such as inadequate regulation, inadequate skills among media practitioners as well as inadequate media development-related infrastructure. It has become necessary to ensure a well-coordinated approach in the sector. Further, with the advent of the electronic media, the need for appropriate regulation and capacity building is cardinal for the growth of the sector," she said.

Siliya said Cabinet also approved the National Information Communication Policy and its Implementation Plan which aims at among other things, to address the challenges that the government was currently facing as regards intra-government communication and communication with the public in order to enhance information flow from government to the

members of the general public and from the members of the general public to the government. Siliya said the policy also addresses the irresponsible use of social media.

She said Cabinet also approved in principle, the introduction of a Bill in Parliament to establish the Professional Filmmakers Guild of Zambia that would organise and govern the activities of actors and film makers and introduce mechanisms that will monitor quality of films.

"The film industry not only provides a means for cultural preservation, but also has the potential to significantly contribute to national development. It is for this reason that Cabinet approved the National Film Policy on 19th May, 2017. The proposed piece of legislation is, therefore, expected to provide a platform which will organise and govern the activities of actors and film makers as well as monitoring the quality of films," she said.

Siliya said to wind up debate for the day, Cabinet approved in principle, the introduction of a bill in Parliament to amend the Teaching Profession Act Number 5 of 2013 in order to redefine the mandates, roles and functions of the Council and the Standards, Evaluation and Assessment Section of the Ministry of General Education and further, harmonize them so as to enhance cost effectiveness, efficiency, and quality in the education service delivery.

Alert-10th August (The Mast)

Dr Fred M'membe says journalism is a profession by occupation and not by certificates, diplomas or degrees. He asks who will determine what knowledge and skills someone should learn and be able to demonstrate to get a journalism licence.

Dr M'membe, a journalist, former managing director and editor-in- chief of The Post newspaper (in liquidation) was reflecting on the recently approved, in principle government bill to regulate the media and licence journalists in Zambia.

In his reflections, sent to the Mast from Mwika Royal Village in Chisali, Dr. M'membe said the government's decision to indirectly licence journalists through some media council was ill-intentioned and that it won't achieve anything good.

"After 26 years of editing one of Zambia's biggest newspapers, I think I can say that in have some reasonable understanding of journalism and the media in general," Dr.M'membe said.

"In addition to this I am a PhD student in journalism and media studies and I am a recipient of many journalism and the media awards. This should give me some reasonable understanding of journalism and the media,"

He argued that one did not need any technical skills comparable in detail to the other professions-to write shoot video, record audio, put it all together online and distribute it. Dr.Mmembe said one could do all that, although perhaps instruction.

"Journalism is a profession by occupation and not by certificates, diplomats or degrees, its no more complex than figuring out how to use your smartphone and laptop," he said.

"Nonetheless, there's no question that journalism schools teach would-be journalism much more than that- everything from defining a story to pitch it to editor's interview people digging out information that authorize would prefer remain, structuring and presenting stories to audience in different formats, not to mention the hands-on experience with the technical election-shooting, editing, data visualization, content management systems and so on and so forth-of online journalism.

Alert-12th August (Daily Nation)

Government should come up with a stimulus packages for media houses to counter the Covid-19 negative impact on business, Young African Leader initiative (YALI has said. The organization observed that the media are key partners in national development and should be considered by government for help during these trying times.

YALI President, Andrew Ntewewe said it was important, for the government to think about the media as they formulate policies on stimulus packages for key sectors of the economy. Mr. Ntewewe said in an interview that most media houses would not survive without a bailout and this would have a huge impact on democracy which he said thrives on freedom of expression.

He said if the media which is the mouth piece of freedom of expression is destroyed by the effects of Covid-19, the fundamental rights such as freedom of expression would suffer because the public would have starved of information. "the biggest danger of the most of the media houses due to Covid-19 is that the public will be starved of information and you want to understand that democracy thrives on sharing of information, that democracy thrives on freedom of expression," he said.

He urged the government to think broadly on the issue of the stimulus package and include the media especially as the country heads towards the 2021 general elections. Mr Ntewewe said the media has had challenges over the years and have become worse with the outbreak of Covid-19. He highlighted high taxation and the high cost of publishing newspaper for the print media as some of the challenges faced by the media houses.

Alert-13th August (PASME Radio)

Threatened

On 13/08/2020, MISA Zambia received a report from radio Pasme Station of its closure by the Petauke District Commissioner for airing a recorded UPND radio program.

Radio Pasme Station Manager Mathews Banda explained that, Ms. Velenasi Moyo pounced on their radio station and stopped a paid-for recorded UPND program saying that they have to always get a police permit whenever they have to feature any opposition political party on radio.

"We notified the police during the day over the program and security situation was ok. No any politicians from any political party came to interfere as the program was running. She came and demanded for a police permit, then she further called the police to come and close the station," Mr Banda stated.

He further said Ms. Moyo said that the station will remain closed until further notice because of airing opposition programs. Mr Banda appealed to MISA Zambia to guide them on further action.

Alert update-14th August (Lusaka Times)

Media bodies in Zambia have condemned Petauke District Commissioner Velenasi Moyo for illegally ordering the closure of privately owned PASME radio station.

Mr. Moyo in the Company of Police Officers is reported to have pounced on the radio station last evening and stopped a paid for recorded UPND program claiming the radio station needed to acquire a permit from the Police.

The Zambia Institute of Independent Media Alliance has challenged the Zambia police service to arrest the District Commissioner, labelling him as a traceable perpetrator of media attacks.

ZIIMA President Jajah Coulibaly says it is sad that in this time and era, officers from the police service who were used to close down PASME FM in Petauke district Eastern province at the orders of a civil servant do not even understand the law but ignorantly act on political instructions.

Mr. Coulibaly said ZIIMA is shocked that civil servants under the current leadership go unpunished despite committing crimes, the latest ones being the Petauke and Mwinilunga DC who also blocked well-wishers from donating.

And MISA Zambia Chairperson Helen Mwale says her Organisation has received with great disappointment the reports that PASME FM in Petauke District has been closed by order of the District Commissioner in Petauke for airing a radio programme featuring an opposition political party leader.

Ms. Mwale says the report indicates that the Petauke District Commissioner, Ms. Velenasi Moyo went to PASME FM yesterday evening and stopped the broadcast of a paid-for recorded radio programme featuring the United Party for National Development.

Ms. Mwale said MISA Zambia finds this senseless act by the District Commissioner not only primitive but an assault and an affront to democracy and the right to citizens to fully express themselves through their freedom of expression and hinders the ability of citizens to freely access information without intimidation whatsoever. The role of the media remains to educate, inform as well as to entertain and it should be given sufficient leverage to do so.

She has reminded the District commissioner that the Independent Broadcasting Authority is the only institution that is mandated by law to regulate media stations as outlined in the IBA Act following the abrogation of laid down procedures and code of ethics. The IBA also has a complaints channel and procedure that the District Commissioner should follow if at all she strongly feels that the station erred in any way.

Alert update-19th August (News Diggers)

Victory

LUSAKA High Court Judge Sharon Newa has dismissed a case in which the National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) had sued ADD leader Charles Milupi and News Diggers Media Limited over a publication that allegedly accused it of corruption and mismanagement of members' funds. Justice Newa said in her ruling that a corporate body cannot commit the offence of corruption, although its officers can and, therefore, no cause of action had been revealed on which NAPSA could attach liability on Milupi and News Diggers. She therefore dismissed the action for want of cause of action.

Communique-19th August (Zambia Reports)

Zambian Breweries has partnered with MISA Zambia in creating further awareness on the dangers of alcohol abuse by sponsoring an award at the 2020 Media Awards. According to a statement, the best media coverage on responsible alcohol consumption will be recognised by Zambian Breweries next month at the 2020 MISA Zambia 18th Platinum and Golden Media Awards in Lusaka.

The Best Reporting in Responsible Alcohol Consumption award, which the country's largest brewing company is sponsoring, will recognise a Zambian journalist who is committed to writing articles on smart drinking.

"Journalists work hard to keep us abreast on various issues every day. But, it's not every day that they get credit for covering critical issues such as responsible drinking. Therefore, this award is our way of appreciating them and recognising their efforts towards responsible alcohol consumption" said Zambian Breweries Director of Corporate Affairs Ezekiel Sekele.

MISA Zambia Chairperson Hellen Mwale thanked Zambian Breweries for sponsoring the Best Reporting in Responsible Alcohol Consumption print category.

"We are grateful to Zambian Breweries for partnering with us on this award. We believe this will go a long way in motivating our press men and women," she said.

Alert Update-21st August (The Mast)

PASME Community Radio Station is demanding K2 million from government and Petauke District Commissioner Velanasi Moyo as damages emanating from the latter's decision to disrupt a paid-for radio programme featuring UPND leader Hakainde Hichilema, failure to which she will be sued in her personal capacity.

According to a demand letter dated August 17, 2020 for damages for trespass addressed to Moyo by lawyers representing the radio station Messrs PNP advocates, the DC is on August 13, this year around 19:30 hours alleged to have stormed the premises of PASME community radio station and ordered that it stops airing Hichilema's paid-for radio programme.

Following management's refusal to heed Moyo's directives the latter called the police and directed them to switch off the radio station to which they did and remained off air for four hours. The action by Moyo is said to have endangered the proper functionality of the radio equipment and caused it serious loss of business for the time it remained off air. It is alleged that staff at the radio station were falsely imprisoned to which mental torture, anxiety and anguish were inflicted on them.

"We have been informed that you (Moyo) have since ordered the closure of our client's community radio station until further notice because they did not apply for and were not issued with a police permit to air content from an opposition political party. According to you, a radio station should obtain a police permit in order for it to air political content from an opposition political party," reads the letter. "The forgoing lawless acts show your clear misapprehension of your role as District Commissioner. By your said actions you breached our client's constitutional rights as enshrined in Article 20 of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution chapter one of the laws of Zambia. You have occasioned damages to our client when you not only

trespassed on their property but also against their property. Your act of switching off the radio station caused them damage as it led to loss of business."

Mara Phiri, who is representing PASME Community Radio Station, indicated that PNP had instructions to demand K1 million as damages for Moyo's lawless acts by today failure to which a lawsuit will be commenced against her in her own capacity and personal cost.

And in a letter copied to the Secretary to the Cabinet and Eastern Province permanent secretary, lawyer Gilbert Phiri who is also representing the community radio station says his client is demanding an unqualified apology from government and an assurance that the lawlessness exhibited by Moyo would not be repeated by any of its servants whenever the radio station features broadcasts from opposition political parties.

Phiri, in a demand letter on behalf of his clients, said the government was liable for the petulant and uniformed actions of its servant, Moyo.

Communique-21st August (The Mast)

Journalists, just like health workers are in the frontline in the crusade to stop the spread of COVID-19 and they need personal protective equipment, says Haroon Ghumra.

A journalist himself with experience spanning 50 years, Ghumra, who is the donations coordinator, said during the second donation of COVID-19 materials to media institutions by Bimbe Trading that the media plays an important role in information dissemination.

He noted that journalists get exposed to the risk of infection in the course of their duty by going to crowded places and interacting with different groups of people. He said he took a personal initiative to solicit protective equipment for private media organisations after observing that public media houses in the country had been receiving such.

Ghumra, who has had stints at Times of Zambia, Daily Mail and ZNBC currently runs a programme called COVID-19 on 5FM radio. Bimbe donated 160 face masks, 160 bottles of hand sanitisers, 96 tablets of medicated soap, eight knapsack sprayers, 16 x 5 litres liquid disinfectants, eight hand washing stands with bucket and dish, 16 brooms, 16 mops, dust pans, toilet brushes and eight buckets.

Company managing director Zakki Nadat, in a speech read for him by public relations manager Ismail Omar, said his company was proud to be part of the COVID-19 fight. He underscores the importance of information reaching the masses timely. He encouraged all people to take bold stands in fighting the pandemic.

Nadat encouraged Zambians to be united in the fight against COVID-19 because they would fall if divided. MISA Zambia chairperson Hellen Mwale, in a vote of thanks, said media houses have not been spared by the coronavirus that has affected all sectors.

She said despite its impact on the sector of reduced finances, the media has remained strong and had continued to inform the public about COVID-19. Mwale said media houses need protection from the pandemic.

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